

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NICOSI 00732 181353Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7465
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 0732

EXDIS

CAIRO FOR RSO; NAIROBI FOR RSS; DEPT FOR A/SY/OPS/FO

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, CY
SUBJECT: CYPRUS INTERIOR MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES FLAGRANT ABUSE OF
CYPRUS TERRITORY BY ARAB UNDESIRABLES

1. I PAID A FAREWELL CALL ON GOC MININT VENIAMIN MARCH 16.
MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF CONVERSATION WAS VENIAMIN'S
DISINGENUOUS INVEIGHING AGAINST HIS POLICE AND INTELLIGENCE
SERVICES FOR NOT PAYING SUFFICIENT HEED TO ARAB MOVEMENTS
IN AND THROUGH CYPRUS AND MAKING LIGHT OF THREAT THEY POSED.
FOLLOWING THE KILLING OF EL-SIBAI AND LARNACA INCIDENT,
VENIAMIN SAID HE HAD TAKEN PERSONAL CONTROL
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OF GOC EFFORTS TO PREVENT ABUSE OF ITS TERRITORY. VENIAMIN SAID
HIS FINDINGS WERE APPALLING. AS A RESULT OF THE LEBANESE CIVIL
WAR, HE HAS NOW ASCERTAINED, CYPRUS HAS BECOME A HAVEN FOR DRUG
TRAFFICKERS, ARMS MIDDLEMEN, COMMON HOODLUMS, AND TERRORISTS,
REAL AND WOULD-BE.

2. AS AN EXAMPLE OF POLICE LAXITY, VENIAMIN SAID INFORMATION

ABOUT EL-SIBAI'S KILLERS WAS ACTUALLY IN GOC'S HANDS HOURS BEFORE THE FEB 18 KILLING. HAD IT BEEN PROPERLY EVALUATED AND PASSED UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND TO HIM, THE MURDER AT THE HILTON COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED.

3. IN TERMS OF REMEDIAL MEASURES, VENIAMIN SAID HE HAS TAKEN VIRTUAL CONTROL OF LARNACA AIRPORT AND THE LIMASSOL CUSTOMS AREA. AT THE FORMER, METAL DETECTORS AND CAMERAS WILL BE IN PLACE WITHIN THE MONTH. THERE WILL BE BODY SEARCHES OF INDIVIDUALS IN SUSPECT CATEGORIES. FREIGHT IN TRANSIT BOTH AT LARNACA AND BY SHIP IN LIMASSOL WILL BE OPENED. A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS POLICY WAS SEIZURE OF RECENT CONSIGNMENT OF 400 PISTOLS ALLEGEDLY FOR ALEXANDRIA BUT IN FACT FOR REROUTING TO LEBANON (REFTEL). NEW ARRIVALS WILL BE CHECKED BY POLICE TO SEE IF THEY ACTUALLY GO TO HOTELS AND DESTINATIONS SPECIFIED ON ENTRY FORMS. PREMISES WILL BE SEARCHED WITHOUT WARRANT, WHICH IS LEGALLY REGRETTABLE BUT ESSENTIAL IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. A SPECIAL POLICE FORCE OF 200 WILL BE BROUGHT INTO BEING JUST FOR THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY AND NECESSARY SURVEILLANCE.

4. VENIAMIN SAID ALL INDIVIDUALS SEEKING TO ENTER CYPRUS WOULD BE REFUSED UNLESS REASONS FOR THEIR PRESENCE WERE CONVINCING. TELLINGLY, HE SAID THAT SINCE LARNACA "LITERALLY DOZENS" OF SUSPICIOUS ARABS HAD BEEN TURNED AWAY.

5. I REMARKED TO VENIAMIN THAT ALL THIS IS COMMENDABLE BUT
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COMES A BIT LATE IN THE DAY. I REMINDED HIM THAT I HAD ALWAYS URGED A FIRMER POLICY. WE HAVE SOUGHT TO ASSIST BY CONVEYING TO THE CIS (CYPRUS INFORMATION SERVICE) INTELLIGENCE CONCERNING TERRORIST MOVEMENTS, WITH LITTLE OR NO FOLLOW-THROUGH ON THE PART OF THE AUTHORITIES. STRICT PRECAUTIONS WERE MORE THAN EVER NECESSARY NOW THAT INTRA-ARAB TENSIONS HAD INTENSIFIED AND THE AUTHORITY OF MAKARIOS, WITH HIS POLICY OF FREE MOVEMENT PROVIDED THERE WERE NO TROUBLE ON HIS ISLAND, WAS NO LONGER.

6. VENIAMIN SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT WE DID FROM TIME TO TIME PASS VALUABLE INTELLIGENCE TO CIS, WHICH SOMETIME FORWARDED IT TO HIM AND SOMETIMES NOT. HE ASKED THAT IN FUTURE WE DROP HIM A DUPLICATE COPY (WHICH WILL BE DONE) AND, IF POSSIBLE, EXPAND THE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION.
CRAWFORD

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